



GREAT BRITAIN, AMERICA,  
AND IRELAND.

A REPLY,

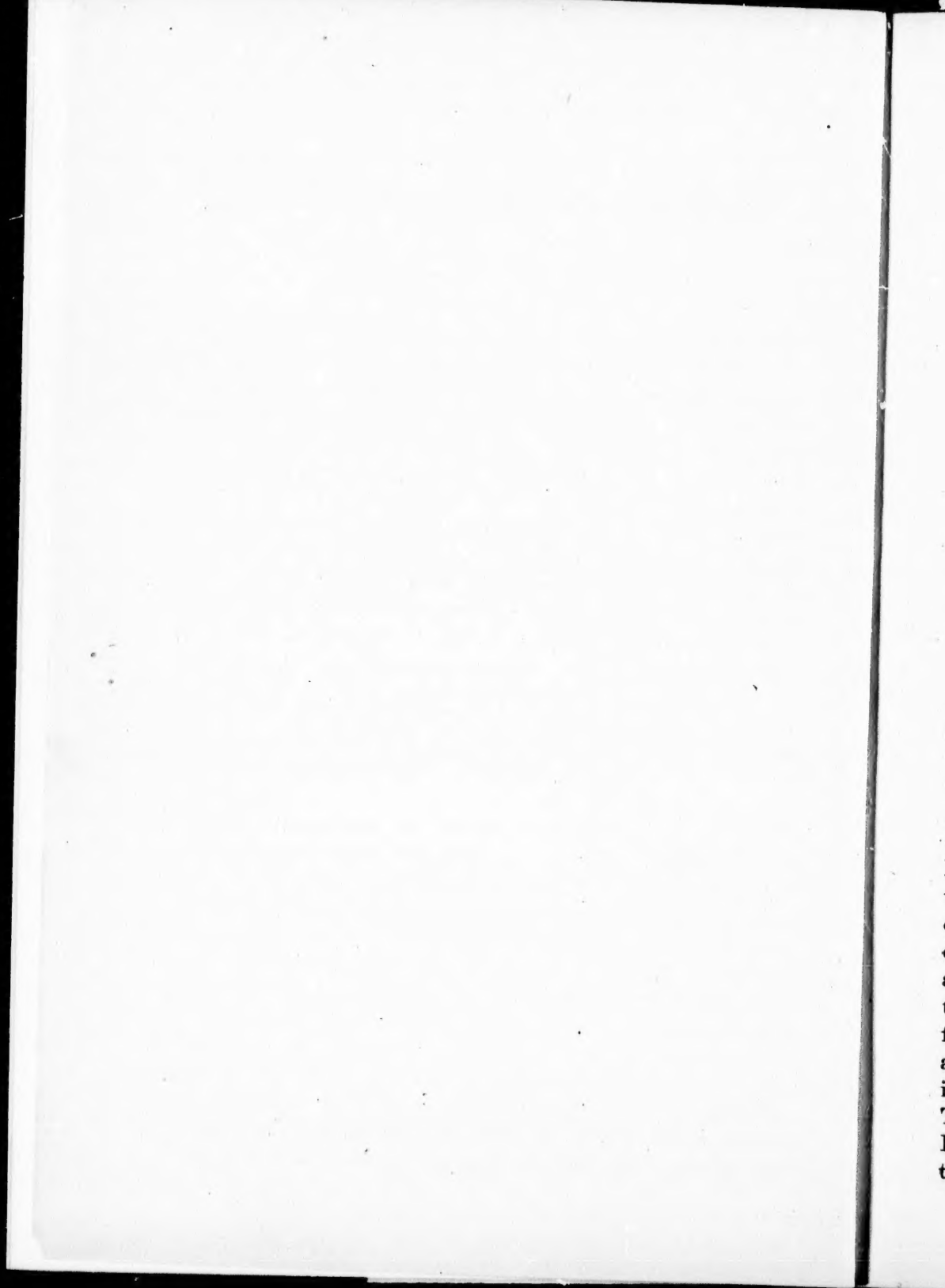
BY

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## GREAT BRITAIN, AMERICA, AND IRELAND.

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THE friendly union of English-speaking people throughout the world is an object not merely of diplomatic interest. That union is now all but complete. The old quarrel with George III. and Lord North is dead and buried; scarcely a trace of it lingers among native Americans, even in Fourth-of-July orations; the House of Brunswick has done everything that royalty could do to cement the reconciliation; and if aristocratic dislike of republicanism is not extinct, it is silenced, or finds a voice only in some organ of decrepitude. Intercourse between America and England grow apace; intermarriage among their citizens increases; sympathy becomes stronger, and shows itself on all great national occasions; common interests multiply; the fusion of science, literature, the churches, is complete; international reviews are set up, and the periodicals of each country circulate largely in the other; wherever the American and the Englishman meet, on distant shores and in face of common peril, it is felt that blood is thicker than water; Westminster Abbey hears the funeral sermons and receives the effigies of the great men of both divisions of the race. Great Britain, if she has hitherto given umbrage by her overweening power, is not likely to continue the offence; for though her sun is still far from its setting, the shadows of her day of Empire begin to lengthen, and she will probably in the future excite in her offspring less of jealousy than of the affection which attaches to the parent of their race, the foundress of their institutions, and the custodian of their historic monuments, tombs, and fanes. To the existence of perfect amity, and a union as entire as the severing Atlantic will permit, almost the sole impediment is now the anti-British feeling of the Irish in the United States. This, apparently, is the main source of all that is hostile to Great Britain in the attitude of American diplomacy, in the action of the American Legislature, or in the language of the American

Press. To entangle the two sections of the Anglo-Saxon race in a quarrel is the constant and avowed object of Irish machinations. That the Government of the United States will deliberately make itself the organ of Celtic enmity in an Old World quarrel is not to be feared; it has refused to open the door for war by recalling Mr. Lowell at the dictation of the Irish; but if the Fisheries Question or any other question should breed a dispute, in a balanced state of American parties, there is no saying what the Irish vote may do.

An eminent member of the New York Press, Mr. E. L. Godkin, for whose pen I entertain the greatest respect, and who is sure always to command attention, writing in the *Nineteenth Century*, maintains that the most fundamental of the facts in the case between England and Ireland has been overlooked by British statesmen, of whose sagacity he has evidently formed rather a low estimate. English hatred of Ireland and Irishmen is, according to him, the root of the mischief, and the feeling, being more than reciprocated by the Irish, is, in his opinion, so insuperable an impediment to union that separation is the only hopeful course. Mr. Godkin's paper appears as an American view of the Irish Question. It is, however, that of an Irish-American, and one who plainly sympathizes with the emotions of his kinsmen towards Great Britain. I am an Englishman, and in controverting his arguments I may be equally moved by national feeling on the other side. But I can say for myself that I have been, as a journalist, the steadfast opponent of British aggrandisement, and during the ascendancy of Jingoism bore my share of the honourable obloquy which was cast on counsels of morality and moderation. My position is much the same as that of an American who opposed the Mexican war, abjured the maxims of an unscrupulous patriotism, but was loyal to the Union. Nor am I likely to be inordinately rapacious on behalf of a country in which it is not probable that I shall ever set foot again. If I understand my own feelings, I care more for the relations of the English-speaking communities in the two hemispheres than I care for any special object of the Mother Country's ambition. I may add that though Mr. Godkin cites me in a way which makes me appear to be one of the traducers of Ireland, I have written on Irish History and Character

in a spirit which has won me the friendship of some of the best and most patriotic of Irishmen, including one whom all regret, the late Dr. Russell, of Maynooth.

Mr. Godkin speaks of Ireland and the Irish indiscriminately; so do writers in general; but there is a distinction which it is most important at once to mark and constantly to bear in mind. Disaffection prevails only in the three Celtic and Catholic provinces—Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. Ulster, which, having been colonized from Scotland, is mainly Teutonic and Protestant, continues all the time prosperous, contented, obedient to the law, and attached to the Union. Yet the political relations of Ulster to Great Britain are exactly the same as those of the rest of the island.

What are the proofs adduced by Mr. Godkin of the general existence in English breasts of this insolent dislike of his compatriots which he deems so fatal a bar to union, and which seems to have entered like iron into his own soul? He begins with perfect candour by admitting that the sentiment has, in a creditable way, been kept out of sight by Englishmen in public writing and speaking about Ireland, as well as excluded from influence in legislation. Surely a sentiment which can be entirely suppressed both in public utterance and in important action, and this in face of a torrent of delirious abuse poured by Irishmen on England, is hardly strong enough absolutely to defy the softening power of time, especially in minds capable of such self-control as the suppression proves. Should we not rather say that as such suppression is impossible to a nation whose organs are a popular assembly and press, if a sentiment finds no expression, it cannot really exist? But, says Mr. Godkin, *Punch* in its caricatures represents the Irish as savages and Thackeray did nothing with so much gusto and success as ridicule Irishmen. *Punch*, I suppose, like *Harper's Weekly* and *Puck*, represents Irishmen as savages when they act like savages, as some of them unhappily do, but not otherwise. Ireland herself, if my memory does not deceive me, generally appears in *Punch* in rather a pathetic guise. As to Thackeray, I should have thought that he had done nothing with half so much gusto and success as ridicule English snobbery; and really in his picture of "The O'Mulligan" I can

see no more venom than in Skakespeare's picture of Fluellen. If Mr. Godkin asks who are the principal propagators of the comic idea of Irish character in fiction, he will find, I believe, that they are Miss Edgeworth, by descent and domicile an Irishwoman, though born in England, and the Irishman Mr. Lever. On the other hand, the melodies in which Moore has presented Ireland in her pathetic aspect have been among the most popular of poems among Englishmen, while their author was the spoilt child of English society in his day.

Of the social prejudices of the richer class in England there are no mirrors more perfect than the great public schools. I was at Eton, about the most typical of those schools, and I declare that while there are other prejudices the existence of which I remember clearly enough, I search my memory in vain for the slightest trace of a prejudice against Irish boys. I can say the same thing with regard to Oxford, where I never heard it breathed that an Irish student was socially or academically at any sort of disadvantage. There may have been jokes against Irishmen as there are against Scotchmen and Welshmen, as there are against John Bull, but in these there was no sting. I cannot pretend to know the great world of London society as well as I know the little worlds of Eton and Oxford, yet I feel sure that there also, if the self-esteem of an Irishman is hurt, he owes it not to his nationality, but to something in himself. Nobody ever objects to intermarriage with an Irish family, or regards Irish blood as a ground for blackballing at a club. That the labouring classes of England cherish no very bitter sentiment against their Irish compeers has been proved by a crucial and even cruel test. They have suffered the bread to be taken from their mouths, their condition to be howered, their efforts to improve it hindered, and themselves in large numbers to be supplanted and driven to emigrate by the torrent of pauperism annually poured in upon them from the land of the philoprogenitive and unthrifty Celt, almost without uttering a murmur of discontent. Not a finger has been raised against the Irish immigration which is the bane of the British artisan.

That Irishmen have their full share, and even more than their full share, of all the honours of the United Kingdom, Mr. Godkin



frankly acknowledges. He may add that they have their share, and rather more than their share, of the places in the Indian Civil Service, while their kinsmen are shouting for the downfall of the Empire. What then is the ground of complaint? Why, that the honour in each case, though conferred upon an Irishman, is not conferred upon him as an Irishman, but as an Englishman, the Briton, in his arrogance, mentally "annexing" every Irishman of mark. There ought, it seems, to be a special form for patents of peerage and knighthoods, designating the recipient as of Irish blood, though I suspect that supersubtle acrimony would soon discover in this an insidious mark of disparagement. A still more intricate process will be required when Irish titles such as "Duke of Connaught" and "Royal Irish" are given as marks of honour. Lord Gough is one of a list of Irish worthies named by Mr. Godkin, as instances of what most people will probably regard as a somewhat metaphysical wrong, and an insufficient cause for the dissolution of an empire. In the Phoenix Park at Dublin, close to the residences of the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary, close also to the spot where Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke were murdered, stands the equestrian statue of Lord Gough. It is not easy to see how recognition of a man's merits as a citizen of the United Kingdom, and of his special connection with Ireland at the same time, could be more clearly signified than by making him a peer of the Imperial Parliament and putting up his statue in an Irish park. That "England has failed to make provision to satisfy the cravings of Irish vanity" may be true. It would be impossible to make such provision, even if vanity were not, as it is, insatiable. The very suggestion seems to me as full of contumely as anything that ever was said of Ireland. Proper provision, and the only possible provision, has surely been made for the reasonable pride and self-respect of Irishmen when every place of honour in the empire has been fairly and freely thrown open to their merits. But the fact is that, in Mr. Godkin's eyes, nobody is a genuine Irishman who is not a Nationalist and an enemy of the Union; and the real burden of his complaint will be found to be that the British Commonwealth does not confer places and honours upon those who are avowedly hostile to its existence. He rehearses a long roll of



heroes,—Wellington, Castlereagh, Canning, the Lawrences, Gough, Nicholson, Roberts, and Wolseley,—of the credit for whom he says Ireland has been robbed by England. But what is to be said of the men themselves? Have they all doffed their nationality in deference to British prejudice, and become renegades for the sake of preferment? “Irishmen,” says Mr. Godkin, “have, it is true, been freely admitted to the service of the Government and have earned some notoriety as persistent and successful place-hunters.” Does the phrase apply to Wellington, Canning, the Lawrences, and the rest? Does it apply to all the Irishmen who are or have been Ministers of State, Privy Councillors, Peers, Bishops, Viceroy of India, Governors of Colonies, Ambassadors? Does it apply to the Chancellors and Judges of Ireland? Suppose an Englishman had called all the Irishmen who ever attained Imperial honours “persistent and successful place-hunters,” what an outcry would there have been! Nothing, apparently, will satisfy Mr. Godkin short of the reception of the Disunionist leaders into the Imperial Government. He does not see “why the confidence of the Birmingham electors should be a better reason for putting Mr. Chamberlain in the Cabinet than the confidence of the Irish people for putting Mr. Parnell or Mr. Sexton in it.” If Mr. Parnell and Mr. Sexton really enjoy the confidence of the Irish people, it is curious that they should find it necessary, for the purpose of maintaining their ascendancy, to have recourse to a system of murderous terrorism and to the aid of the Fenians of New York. But Great Britain surely may reasonably say that she will admit to her councils men who are morally reeking with the blood of her loyal citizens, and who have conspired with her foreign enemies for her destruction, when the American Republic or any other nation not lost to honour shall have done the same.

It is hard, says Mr. Godkin, that the Irish nation, of all nations in the world, should be judged solely by reference to its poorest class, and that the small farmer, the farm labourer, and the small shop-keeper should be taken as the types of the whole people. Hard indeed! But is this not exactly what the framer of the indictment himself does? Does he not cut off from Irishry not only all the men of mark, but all the more educated classes, who are now unionist, or at least opposed to revolution, and confine

nationality to the Fenians and Land Leaguers, the followers of O'Donovan Rossa and Parnell?

In regard to the "mental annexation" grievance, he thinks that Americans can sympathize with the Irish, inasmuch as they are constantly insulted in English society by an analogous manifestation of British self-conceit. They find themselves taken for Englishmen and addressed as such, by way of "subtle but intentional compliment," and as "evidently the most seductive flattery which an Englishman thinks can be administered." I venture to surmise that sometimes the subtlety is on the side of the person who fancies himself flattered, and that the stolid Englishman is either making a perfectly honest though perhaps maladroit remark, or has simply fallen into an error. I do not myself know a native of Philadelphia or Baltimore by his pronunciation or by any other outward sign from an Englishman, and I might talk to him for a whole evening without discovering the truth. An inauspicious fancy has played over the whole of this subject, and makes its influence felt, I submit, even in Mr. Lowell's pungent essay "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners," which to Mr. Godkin appears fraught with instructive facts. Americans who have lived long in London cease to be haunted by these suspicions.

Has not Mr. Godkin himself inadvertently taken an eminent citizen from Ireland and annexed him to England in styling Mr. Philip Bagenal "an English traveller"? Bagenal is a well-known Irish name, and in the last century was borne by the member for the county of Carlow, who proposed a grant of public money to Grattan for his services in the assertion of Irish independence. I doubt, therefore, whether England can be said to stand convicted by her own confession when Mr. Philip Bagenal declares that the low place in the social ladder taken in America by the mass of the Irish emigrants is due to the influence of British calumny. How is it possible that uneducated and unskilled labourers coming into a community which is pre-eminently one of education and of skilled industry should take any but a low place till they had undergone a training for something higher?

Irishmen must expect to be judged, like the rest of us, by their deeds. When they do well they will receive praise, and in overflowing measure, if they have had to contend against disadvan-

tages. When they do ill, they will be blamed, with due allowance for the extenuating circumstances of their case. When they become the agents or the slaves of a dark and sanguinary system of terrorism ; when they commit a long series of cold-blooded and most hideous murders ; when they butcher the husband with the wife and children clinging to their knees ; when they deliberately shoot down women and slaughter boys ; when they burn the houses of widows ; when they mutilate helpless cattle and cut off the udders of cows ; when instead of condemning the assassin they applaud, abet and harbour him ; when they outrage civilization and humanity with their dynamite ; when, children of misfortune themselves, they cruelly trample on the unhappy negro ; when they requite the hospitality of the American Republic by abetting the slave-owner in his assault upon its unity, rising in concert with him to resist the draft at the most perilous crisis of the civil war, and perpetrating in the streets of New York the same horrors which they perpetrate in Ireland,—we shall not refrain from giving utterance to the feelings of nature, even though it should cost us the integrity of our empire. Nor can we be constrained to call the Irish good citizens where they follow blindly in the train of political sharpers, and form the army of violence or corruption, or ascribe to them independence of character where they remain the slaves of wirepullers and priests. If, of late, some strong things have been said against them, it must be borne in mind that the deeds of the Irish Terrorists are not like those of the Carbonari, or even those of the Nihilists, dark, bloody, and such as society to preserve itself must repress, yet within the pale of political crime. Never was the assassin's dagger sheathed in a breast which had less merited the blow than that of Lord Frederick Cavendish, and the savage brutality of the act shocked the civilized world. But the murder of the Joyce family was worse than that of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, and yet in some circumstances of atrocity even this yielded to crimes which have made less noise. In the English correspondence of the *New York Tribune* the other day, there was an account of the murder of John Leahy, of Killarney. Leahy, according to the correspondent, was a quiet inoffensive man, advanced in years, who took a piece of meadow land from which a tenant had been evicted and paid rent for it.

At midnight fifteen armed men broke into his house and dragged him out of bed. His wife threw herself upon his body and entreated the assailants to kill her and spare his life. They pushed her aside, dragged him into the kitchen, forced him to kneel before them, and demanded if it was not true that he had paid his rent. He could not deny it. They then asked if there was any whiskey in the house, and the wife said they should have the keys and anything they wanted, if only they would not shoot her husband. But shoot him they did, even while she was clasping him in her arms. Three men were called upon to fire in turn, being addressed by different numbers, three, twelve, and fourteen, and the old man was left to breathe his last, murdered because he had leased a meadow and paid rent for it. So far as men of this character were concerned, there was no difficulty in believing the private accounts, which, in contradiction to the public, told us that the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish was hailed with general exultation, and that the corpse was hooted at its departure from Dublin. That the commission of these outrages is the only way of waking the House of Commons into activity about Irish grievances is a plea in meeting which I find it hard to suppress indignation. The worst of the outrages were committed after the passing of the Land Act, the very worst after the passing both of the Land Act and the Arrears Act; almost the whole of them, I believe, after the appointment of the Irish Land Commission (July, 1880). In those neat and rose-covered cottages of England the delight of the artist's eye, where poverty struggles hard by cleanliness and neatness to keep up the appearance of respectability, the pinch of want has been hardly less severe than in the Irish cabin. The English labourers combined under the leadership of Joseph Arch for the improvement of their condition; their movement has been successful, and I am not aware that it has been sullied by a single crime.

Nor are the Irish outrages palliated by the grandeur of their object. What the tenant farmers who compose the Land League seek is not the nationalization of the land, but the appropriation of it to themselves, they being in many cases merely casual occupants, and in some cases occupants in consequence of previous evictions. Their aim is simply to repudiate the payment of rent,

to oust the proprietor and to take his place, which having been effected they would sell the land, sub-let it if they pleased, and deal with it in all respects as the proprietor deals with it now. They have not the slightest intention of giving a rood to their farm labourers, of whom there is a large number, and to whom they often prove hard masters. Still less do they intend that the land shall be restored to the tribe. I believe I was among the first to point out that the tradition of tribal ownership is a factor in the sentiment of the question ; but it is a factor in the sentiment and nothing more. Let a man who traces his pedigree to the Tribe ask a Land Leaguer for his share of the tribal land and the Land Leaguer will give him six feet of it.

No doubt, when Englishmen and Scotchmen are provoked beyond measure by the conduct and the language of the Irish, they sometimes give vent to their exasperation, and in violent terms ; if they are hot-tempered and free of speech, they say that Ireland is not worth what she costs, and that they wish she could be towed a thousand miles off or swallowed up by the sea. But these outbursts are very different from settled hatred and contempt.

The hatred felt for England by the Irish in the United States amounts, says Mr. Godkin, to frenzy, and proves by its intensity that the feud is internecine, and that the breach can never be healed ; to which he might perhaps add that frenzy is neither a cool judge of the facts of a case nor so wise a counsellor that the American people can prudently surrender to it the guidance of their national policy. But Mr. Godkin's view seems to be limited to that which is immediately around him. If he will do us the honour to visit Canada he will find that here the feeling is comparatively weak. I am told that it is comparatively weak in Australia also. In New York and Boston it is fostered and inflamed by the assiduous arts of Tammany politicians angling for the Irish vote, and of Fenian dynamite-mongers who subsist upon the fund. When the Fenians twice invaded Canada, not a single Irish Canadian lifted a finger in aid of them or gave them any overt sign of welcome. I must leave it to Americans to say whether, when the Irish prosper and become settled in comfortable homes, their active sympathy with Fenian enterprises does not begin to abate.

Now a word by way of general reply to Mr. Godkin's view of the political case and prospect. The three Celtic and Catholic provinces of Ireland are the ill-starred Brittany or Calabria of the United Kingdom. The people have been kept economically, socially, and politically in a backward state by untoward influences of situation, soil, and climate, by aboriginal weaknesses of character, by calamitous accidents of history, and by the Roman Catholic religion. They are being gradually and painfully brought up to the level of the more advanced civilization, and trained to constitutional self-government, though the process of education is interrupted from time to time by recurring outbreaks of tribal anarchy, which call for the adoption of temporary measures of repression in order to prevent the people from ruining their own prospects and free institutions at the same time. Even in the United States, Irish lawlessness has sometimes given birth to emergencies of a smaller kind. The difficulty is enormously increased by the prevalence of political incendiarism, which has now become a trade, plied by adventurers in America as well as in Ireland itself, whose object is not to further practical improvement but to keep alive disaffection.

The situation of Ireland is unhappy, because while nobody can look at the two islands on the map and mark how they lie relatively to each other and to the continent without seeing that their destinies are knit together by the hand of nature, the channel which separates them has been wide enough hitherto to estrange them and prevent the smaller island from partaking in the progress of the larger, though improved steam navigation is now doing its work. Of the soil no small portion is mountain or bog, while the climate is generally too wet for the profitable raising of cereals, so that the most important industry is cattle-breeding, a fact apparently fatal to that vision of the patriot, a peasant proprietary with small farms. A large population can be maintained only on the potato, and as the people multiply recklessly, failures of that precarious crop have bred famines, to the sufferers by which, I believe it may be said, Great Britain has ministered relief, both in the way of public grant and of private subscription, with no niggardly hand. A happier mode of depletion has of late years been found in emigration, though that remedy has been



opposed by priest and demagogue alike; and a number of Irish certainly larger than the present population of the island, finds subsistence in the British Colonies or in the United States, and denounces British tyranny for robbing them of a country in which they could not possibly have found bread. As Ireland raises only 130,000 tons of coal, while she imports two millions, she cannot herself be a manufacturing country; but a million and a half of her people at least find employment in the manufacturing cities of Great Britain, where their political character is the same as it is in the cities of the United States. Some other sources of wealth, such as fisheries or quarries, might be opened, the beauties of the coast might attract the dwellings of opulence, and a larger measure of prosperity might be attained, if outrage would cease and investment could become secure. In the last forty years the number of cattle had doubled, pauperism had decreased ninety per cent., and the amount of money in savings-banks and other banks of deposit had become very large, and while the marine suburbs of Dublin were attesting by their extension the growth of wealth, when a bad season, causing local distress and rendering many of the poor tenants incapable of paying the rents, the rate of which in their desperate competition for the land they had raised against themselves, brought on an agrarian agitation. Political incendiarism, Irish and American, pounced upon the movement for its own purposes, and the result has been an outbreak of murderous anarchy which has had the usual effect on commerce and the material prosperity of the country.

I am not one of those who believe that the defects of races are congenital or ineradicable; I regard them as the offspring of unpropitious circumstance, which more propitious circumstance may remove. But whatever the cause may be, whether it be an undue prolongation of the clan organization, or any other primeval accident, certain it is that the Celt, while gifted with a lively sociability and many graces, is politically weaker than the Teuton, and less capable of self-government. America sees this as well as Great Britain. Mommsen, who is a neutral in the Irish Question, concludes his portrayal of the Celtic character with the harsh words "politically useless." The frenzy of hatred which Mr. Godkin himself ascribes to his compatriots, and the frantic language in



which it finds vent, are signs not of force but of weakness, and for that very reason may not be so lasting as Mr. Godkin thinks. Is it very "pedagogic" to hold that the Celt, in his progress towards self-government, requires to be supported and sometimes to be saved from his "frenzy" by a stronger arm? In the quality of independence it is impossible to doubt that the Irish Celt is wanting; for he allows himself to be bullied and fleeced from his cradle to his grave by priests and political swindlers, whose exactions are no small drawback on his chances of improving his material condition. I have said all along, and the demeanour of the neighbourhood after the Joyce murder confirms me in the belief, that on the present occasion the mass of the people were the victims, and not the agents, of the Terror, and that the blow which struck Terrorism down would set the people free.

The Roman Catholic religion has produced in all countries the same effect upon the character and the material condition of the people. The church may be the door of salvation, but it is not the oracle of intelligence or thrift. Nor has aptitude for self-government been anywhere found in conjunction with such a belief as that of the Irish, in the miracles wrought by plaster taken from the church of Knock. This may be said without denying that honour and sympathy are due to the Roman Catholic priests who were the spiritual guides and comforters of the Irish peasantry during centuries of darkness and distress. The British Government has introduced into Ireland an excellent system of national education, which, unless all analogy misleads us, could never have been introduced by the clergy. I would invite Mr. Godkin, before he uses unmeasured language of censure, to compare the condition of Ireland in this respect with that of any other country at all similarly circumstanced in which the Roman Catholic priesthood has equal sway. For French Canada a British and Protestant partner has done pretty much what Great Britain has done for Ireland. In Spain, Southern Italy (at least till yesterday), and Mexico, no extraneous influence intervening, we have seen what the natural tendencies of Catholicism were. The Scotch Highlanders were in much the same condition as the Irish before Presbyterianism extended its influence to the Highlands.

That the course of Irish history has been most unfortunate, and that the greatest allowance is to be made on this account for anything that may be amiss in Irish character, no writer, I believe, has taken greater pains to show than I have. The two main fountains of calamity, whose bitter waters have not yet ceased to flow, were mediæval conquest and the religious wars of the Reformation, for neither of which is any living Englishman more responsible than he is for the events of the glacial period.

The conquest of Ireland was not English but Norman. It was a supplement of the Norman conquest of England, both in its aspect as an enterprise of military ambition and as a religious crusade undertaken at the instigation of the Papacy for the purpose of bringing a schismatic church more completely under the dominion of Rome. It was doubly invited by the Irish themselves, the clergy having stretched out their hands to the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics for aid against the impious aggressions of the chiefs, while Dermot, one of the chiefs, called in the fatal help of Strongbow to avenge his personal quarrel. It killed, so far as we can see, nothing of much value or promise, since the Church, the organ, and the sole organ, at an earlier period, of a precociously brilliant civilization, had been trampled down by the barbarism of the clans whose anarchic conflicts filled, and would probably long have continued to fill, the scene. Mr. Godkin, I think, can hardly be serious in setting it down as one of the wrongs of Ireland that history will not recognize the primeval glories of Tara's Halls: it would be paying his race a poor compliment to suppose that they loved to be fed on blarney. Unluckily, while the Norman conquest of England was achieved by a king whose power suspended the anarchic tendencies of feudalism, and was thus rendered complete, the conquest of Ireland was left to private adventure under the auspices of feudal lords, the consequence of which was that the conquest of Ireland remained incomplete, and instead of a national aristocracy, destined afterwards to coalesce with the people, gave birth to a military colony or pale, between which and the natives who occupied the rest of the island there raged for centuries a deadly war of race, afterwards aggravated by a war of religion.

In the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Celtic Ireland was involved as a member of the Catholic Confederacy, and, being weak and remote from her allies, she met the usual fate of the dwarf who goes to war as the companion of the giant. But she aided to the utmost of her power the attempt of the Catholic kings to extirpate Protestantism and liberty with the sword and the stake. She co-operated with the fitters-out of the Armada, she massacred the Protestants in 1645, she furnished soldiers to the persecuting armies of Louis XIV., she conspired with James II. against civil and religious liberty. The Protestants, after their narrow escape from the conspiracy, bound down the Catholics with cruel disabilities. The Catholics of the Continent, meanwhile, were burning Protestants alive; and toleration advancing with the eighteenth century, had begun practically to mitigate the penal code before the *auto-da-fe* had ceased to be performed. An Irish army in the service of the Pope made the last stand against Italian independence, and public education in the United States is even now not wholly free from disturbance or menace on the part of the Irish Catholic Church.

Perhaps the blackest portions of this disastrous history are the restrictions imposed, before the Union, on Irish commerce, because these were the offspring of mere selfishness, unredeemed by any zeal for a principle. But they belonged to the general era of protection, when the whole of Europe was possessed with that economical heresy, and when nobody found fault with Chatham, the champion of colonial liberty, for saying that he would not allow a colony to manufacture a nail for a horseshoe. Since the Union, England has opened to Ireland, with perfect freedom, the richest and best market in the world, which a severance of the Union would put in her power, in case of unfriendly relations, again to close.

The abolition of the Irish Parliament in 1800 I cannot regard as a substantial wrong, though it was done in the worst possible way. What that Parliament was, the Nationalist Sir Jonah Barrington has told us, and Mr. Godkin cannot question the truth of the description, though he thinks it disingenuous in us to refer to it without saying that the English Parliament was as The bad. British Parliament, however, though vastly in need of

reform, was nothing like as bad as that of Ireland: it would never have sold its own existence and that of the nation as the Parliament of Ireland did. Mr. Godkin himself tells us that the Irish Parliament "had only an idle, dissolute, and bigoted class behind it." The reason for not believing that it would, like the British Parliament, have improved with time, is the doom which it brought on itself. After twenty years of corruption, profligacy, and violence, its career closed in a hideous war of races and religions, in which it morally expired, nothing remaining between the country and the bloodiest anarchy but the military power of England. Pitt ought to have recognized the fact, and instead of buying with money and peerages the votes of scoundrels who had practically nothing but themselves left to sell, and thereby incurably tainting the transaction, to have done what Cromwell under similar circumstances did, and simply declared Ireland united to Great Britain,

The British nation obtained for itself self-government by the Reform Bill of 1832, before which the Parliament had been nominated by an oligarchy, not elected by the people. It fully imparted its recovered liberties to Ireland, who received her full share of representation, and towards whom from that hour legislation, whatever may have been its shortcomings, has been uniformly animated by a spirit of liberality, of kindness, and of remorseful anxiety to atone for the wrong-doings of the past. I well remember the emphasis with which a great French statesman, who, though friendly enough to England, was no Anglo-maniac, asserted and repeated the assertion that the conduct of England to Ireland for thirty years had been admirable. This was before the disestablishment of the Protestant Church. If there is any fact on the other side, let it be pointed out. Coercion there has been, when anarchy broke out, but never, I suspect, coercion so vigorous as that which followed the Irish rising in New York. In an old country where the party of reaction is still strong, progress is slow; it is slow for Great Britain as well as for Ireland: but it has been faster for Ireland than for England: Ireland had her national system of education some time before England had hers; the State Church of Ireland has been abolished and perfect religious equality established, while in England the State Church

still exists ; and in regard to the Land Question, the most momentous of all, changes have been made by successive Acts of Parliament, in the interest of the tenant, far in advance of anything that has been done for the tenants in England, and such as would not be possible in the United States, where legislative breaking of contracts and sponging out of debts already due is precluded (wisely and righteously, as I believe) by a fundamental law. For disestablishment Mr. Godkin denies to Parliament any credit on the ground that the Irish people had never entered the churches which were disestablished ; but on consideration he will find that beneath this stricture there lurks what the scoffers call a characteristic product of the Irish mind.

Mr. Godkin seems to think that Ireland might have been contented if she had been put on the same footing with regard to legislation as Scotland. She is on the same footing as Scotland. The House of Commons makes by its rules no special arrangement for the benefit of the Scotch delegation. But the Scotchmen are not bushwhackers: they are solid, shrewd, and serious people: they choose to work parliamentary institutions rather than to wreck them; and by simply combining, where combination was necessary, in their special interest, and acting cordially on all other matters with their colleagues, they have got everything which with any approach to unanimity they desired. Nothing hinders the Irish members from going into caucus on any Irish question but their own fierce dissensions, which the House of Commons did not create and cannot heal.

The last move of the Irish members, at least of the Fenian section of them, which I would beg leave to remind Mr. Godkin hardly numbers more than thirty, has been a deliberate and avowed attempt to wreck Parliament by obstruction, for the purpose of bringing about Disunion. Would the people of the United States bear with tameness the attempt of a party, say, of "unreconstructed" Southerners, to wreck Congress in the same way for the purpose of renewing Secession? Is not the British Parliament in repressing obstructionists by the clôtüre, by suspension, or by any other measure that may be needful, defending the very life of representative government? I do not trust much to the clôtüre, nor can I help thinking that in forcing on the House with the

party whip a form of it to which the convictions of the majority are notoriously opposed, the Ministry is doing what is impolitic and wrong; but nobody will be gagged who makes an honest and loyal use of his power of speech.

In regard to administration, Mr. Godkin thinks the case is as bad as in regard to legislation; the government of Ireland, he avers, has been for the last eighty years the worst in Europe—worse than that of Spain, of Naples, of the Italian provinces of Austria, of the Christian provinces of Turkey. Once more I would call attention to the fact that Ulster is a part of Ireland. But even with respect to the Celtic provinces, apart from agrarian or disunionist agitation, and the temporary measures of repression which they entail, can Mr. Godkin's sweeping statement be sustained? Nobody taxes the Government with corruption or with violence; the practical administration is almost entirely in the hands of Irishmen, though, as we saw in the case of Mr. Burke, their Irishry does not save them from assassination; the law is the same as that of England, and substantially the same as that of the United States; the judiciary is learned, respectable and pure; if jury trial does not work well, it is because, like representative government, it has been given to the people in advance of their real fitness; the fiscal system is free trade; there are very good public schools, with every reasonable safeguard for conscience; the police is excellent, and Mr. Godkin is mistaken in imagining that, as a general rule, life and property are insecure, for statistics will show him that the average of ordinary crime is low. That the Government has not for the last fifty years resorted to exceptional measures, except when, and so long as, they appeared necessary for the repression of lawlessness, that it has never shown the slightest desire to encroach permanently on liberty, I am as firmly convinced as I am of any fact in history. It is preposterous to brand as despotism the force which a commonwealth, threatened with civil war, puts forth to save itself from disruption, and which twenty years ago was put forth on the most gigantic scale by the United States.

Mr. Godkin complains that, while the Lord Advocate of Scotland is always a Scotchman, the Chief Secretary for Ireland is not an Irishman. The Lord Advocate is a law officer, who must



be versed in the local law of Scotland. The Attorney General for Ireland is always an Irishman ; and so is the Chancellor. That Irishmen were excluded from the Chief Secretaryship because English members of Parliament did not like to do business with them, I never heard ; what I have heard is that the Government would gladly take an Irishman if they could find one whose appointment would not be insufferable to the opposite party in Ireland. I remember the time, even if it is now past, when it was with difficulty that men of opposite parties in Ireland could be brought to meet each other at dinner. Lord Naas was an Irishman, as well as Chichester Fortescue, and Sir John Young was connected with Ireland. It is news to Chichester Fortescue's friends that he does not wish to be regarded as representing his country ; he has especially identified himself with all Irish questions. But he is not a Disunionist, and, therefore, in Mr. Godkin's view, he is not an Irishman.

Mr. Godkin indulges his Nationalist sympathies in a bitter and somewhat personal attack on the late Chief Secretary, Mr. Forster. What is certain is that Mr. Forster was not sent to Ireland as an emissary of English hatred. I have quoted, in a lecture to which Mr. Godkin refers, to testimony borne by Mr. A. M. Sullivan, a moderate Home Ruler, to the self-devotion shown by Mr. Forster as an envoy of the English Relief organization in Ireland at the time of the great famine. In that ministration he must have seen a great deal of the people and their grievances : he has in his own constituency at Bradford a large Irish element ; and he is in daily contact with leading Irishmen of all parties at Westminster, so that his lack of knowledge could hardly have been the reason for giving him the post any more than his lack of good will. To tax him, of all men, with a tendency to despotism will appear to all who have watched his public career the most preposterous injustice. He had to deal not with a constitutional agitation which he, like all other Liberals, would have respected ; but with an attempt of the American Fenians, in combination with a Terrorist organization in Ireland sustained by the Fenian fund, to kindle the flame of civil war. He did no more than was necessary to prevent civil war from breaking out ; that object he effected without shedding a drop of blood, for which, by the way, he was pri-



vately derided as a "Quaker" by men who were openly siding with the Irish against him, and denouncing him for resorting to Coercion. I happened to be in Ireland at the crisis, and can testify that, in the opinion of the coolest and most competent observers, the allegiance of the people was being transferred from the government of the Queen to that of the Land Leaguers and Terrorists. Mr. Godkin might think this not a bad thing. But Mr. Forster's duty was to stop it, and this he could do only by striking down the Land League government. If the particular measure adopted was not the best, the responsibility does not rest on him alone; for the Prime Minister personally announced the arrest of Mr. Parnell to an applauding multitude at Guildhall. The most abundant proof can be furnished from the organs of his Fenian adversaries that assassination, as well as revolution, was their game. Himself daily threatened by assassins, he lost neither nerve nor good humour. His speech at Tullamore, by the "pedagogism" of which Mr. Godkin is greatly exasperated, was highly praised at the time by men who, at all events, are no "pedagogues," and who ought to be tolerable judges of anything relating to Ireland. It was not a stump oration, but the address of a responsible ruler to ignorant peasants who were being incited by conspirators to the commission of fearful crimes. If Americans would not have liked its tone of authority, still less would they have liked to do the things which made its tone appropriate. Mr. Forster has his enemies in England as well as in Ireland, and I cannot help thinking that Mr. Godkin's invective against him is partly an echo of theirs. If his policy was not entirely successful, this was partly due to the action of enemies who were cutting its sinews from behind, and waving over his head a signal flag to the public enemy. It is only to be hoped that this party had no sympathy in the Cabinet. No sooner had Mr. Forster been thrown over, and the reversal of his policy proclaimed, than a new Coercion Act, more stringent than his, was brought in. He did his best in a dangerous post for England, and justice will be done him by history.

To Mr. Godkin it evidently appears an absurdity verging upon impudence to say that the same hands which have given Ireland the Land Act are ready to give her any rational and feasible

measure of Home Rule. Yet nothing is more certain than that at the moment when all legislation was arrested by Obstruction, the Liberal leaders were about to propose an extension of local self-government, in which Ireland would have had her share. A Grand Committee of the House of Commons for Ireland is a plan which has sometimes presented itself amongst the possible solutions of the Irish problem. The objections are, first, the difficulty of making Grand Committees work at all under the party system, unless the majority of the Committee is of the same party as the majority of the House; secondly, the awkwardness of assigning the local affairs of Scotland and Ireland to Grand Committees, and leaving the affairs of England to the House at large; thirdly, the heterogenous character and mutual hostility of the elements, Catholic and Orange, of which the Grand Committee for Ireland would be composed; lastly, what is most serious, that, as institutions are apt to take their practical bent from the circumstances under which they are established and the hands into which they first fall, a Grand Committee for Ireland established at the present crisis and composed at the outset of the present Irish members would almost certainly be turned into an engine of secession. I have often wished, though I fear the difficulty of fulfilling the wish is too great, to see Parliament hold an occasional session in Dublin, both for the purpose of informing itself more thoroughly about Irish questions and for that of letting the people see their government and paying homage to national feeling. But there is the will, if the way can be found, to make any concession compatible with the preservation of the legislative union, the strain upon which would be eased by the extension of local self-government. That the legislative union should be deserted by British statesmen is not conceivable, far removed as we are from the Commonwealth. On both sides of the Atlantic, party has its evil and ignoble exigencies; it has already betrayed England into paying blackmail to Terrorism when a single hour of a patriotic Parliament would have abashed rebellion and at once put an end to the peril. There is a section of the English politicians which, partly under the influence of the Irish vote, has throughout screened and virtually abetted the Terrorists, and which would perhaps under the same influence be willing, for the purpose of

retaining power, to tamper with the integrity of the Union. But I cannot believe that this party will be allowed to prevail: if I could I would almost as soon be a Mexican as an Englishman. To give up a part of the United Kingdom and to allow it to be made the seat of a hostile power which would have offshoots and outposts in every British city where there is an Irish colony, as well as in the United States, is surely a folly and a dishonour to which even the recklessness of faction can never make a nation stoop. An American protectorate of Ireland, which some people propose, will be possible after a conquest of Great Britain by American arms, as a Franco-British protectorate of a Southern confederacy, which was also projected, would have been possible after a conquest of the United States by the arms of France and England. Let American statesmen judge for themselves what interest they and their country have in giving Irish Catholicism a new basis and a stronger fulcrum for its operations against the fundamental principles of Anglo-American institutions.

"Part in peace," is Mr. Godkin's advice to Great Britain and Ireland. The same advice was tendered in another case, and was rejected with the best results not only to the nation immediately concerned but to humanity. Yet Slavery was at least as sharp and estranging a line of division as any which exists between the Irish Celts and the other people of the United Kingdom, with whom in fact, both in England and Scotland, the Irish Celts are largely blending. If the Irish Celt is irreconcilable he is doomed; for a high civilization assailed with dynamite and the Thug-knife, though from constitutional scruple and sensibility to scandal it may hesitate to strike, will be compelled to strike at last. But the Irish Celt is not irreconcilable. Mr. Godkin, as has been said before, has in his eye only the cities of the United States where a fire fanned by politicians and conspirators is blazing and crackling among thorns. Where it is left to itself the feeling is not nearly so strong. Upon the Catholics of the upper classes in Ireland the Liberal policy of half a century has told, and they are now, almost without exception, opposed to revolution. The most eminent of them are decided Unionists. The Protestant gentry have always been on that side. Mr. Parnell is one of the smaller gentry, but there is a distance which he is said pretty distinctly to

mark, between him and any of his followers who, let me repeat, muster less than thirty in the House of Commons. Movements without any leaders of the higher class have seldom been successful. There have been many notable conversions from the revolutionary ranks; among them Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, formerly editor of the *Nation*, D'Arcy McGee, who was murdered by the Fenians, and, I believe, I may add the great poet of the movement, the writer of "Who fears to Speak of '98?" Mr. Godkin predicts that the bitterness of the Irish will increase instead of diminishing with their prosperity and education; such facts as have fallen under my own notice point rather the other way; but of this at all events I feel sure, that if the oratorical and literary expression of a vindictive sentiment increases with prosperity and education the tendency to fly to arms does not. A common language is a great assimilating force; and though it is true (and I have myself more than once pointed it out as a dangerous feature of the present situation) that in the course of this protracted struggle a popular literature steeped in Disunionism has grown up, this literature is of a coarse character and will certainly be superseded in time by the higher, which breathes sentiments of the opposite kind. Mr. Godkin may have noticed that the police, which is almost entirely composed of Irishmen and largely of Roman Catholics, has remained perfectly true to the Government; the brief dispute which occurred the other day about the rate of pay being one of those exceptions which prove the rule; and it has seldom happened that where popular feeling has been very intense a native police, or even a native army, has escaped infection. Nay, furiously secessionist as the utterances of the Parnellite members of Parliament are, there is some reason for surmising that these gentlemen secretly value their seats in the Imperial House of Commons, and that the fear of losing a position which they affect to abhor has had something to do with their recent display of comparative moderation. Nothing could be more fraught with Irish frenzy than a letter which at the commencement of the Land League agitation was published by one of our Irish Catholic prelates in Canada; but the same prelate has just been recounting, with the greatest complacency, his gratifying reception at the British Court. For Irish sentiment, of which I desire to speak with

heartly sympathy and respect, there is room, as there is for Scotch sentiment, within the Union.

The fact is that the political revolution, though to Mr. Godkin, who is in the midst of the Fenians, it seems the principal movement, has ever since 1798 been extremely weak. It has never been able to generate a particle of military force ; its appearances in the field have always been the merest flashes in the pan. The agrarian movement, which touched the pockets of the people, has alone been really strong. Hence, among the political conspirators it has always been easy, as the New York *Evening Post* remarked the other day, to find any number of spies and informers ; while among the agrarian conspirators, the object being substantial and the feeling really intense, mutual fidelity has been strict. The present movement, so far as the people of Ireland are concerned, is almost purely agrarian, though the agrarian quarrel is no doubt in some degree envenomed by antipathy of race and religion. Only from its alliance with the Land League does Fenianism derive any strength, beyond the agencies of Terrorism purchased with its own funds. The real centre of political insurrection, as well as the main source of its supplies, is not in Ireland itself but in New York, where one of the leaders told us the other day that his motto was "dynamite first, last, and all the time." American Fenianism appears to be compounded in proportions, which it is difficult to determine, of Irish sentiment, Nihilism, and the tendency of certain active spirits to live, not by the sweat of their brows, but by the collection and administration of political funds. The chief of the whole, and the destined regenerator of his race, is described in a biographical notice which, if I guess rightly, is the work of a well-informed writer, as having wandered through various callings and enterprises, including an unsuccessful attempt at journalism and two unsuccessful attempts at saloon-keeping, before he took to Dynamite. He and one of his principal associates were the other day publicly accusing each other of peculation, lying, and treachery, in language of Celtic fervency, and probably without any breach of veracity on either side. I should like to see the native American who believes that the Skirmishing Fund is going to give good government and happiness to Ireland. Mr. Godkin in forecasting the



character of a separate Irish government admits that it would probably be marked by a diminished tenderness to individual rights and a greater tendency to submit to the exercise of arbitrary power. In other words, it would be a relapse into barbarism.

That the troubles of Ireland are at an end I do not affect to believe. They will not be at an end till Parliament sets faction aside and shows patriotic spirit in dealing with a public peril. Such a policy as that embodied in the Arrears Act is successful for a time only. By the events of the last two years the respect of the people for contracts and law must have been severely shaken, the security of property impaired, and capital frightened away. It is not unlikely that the next general election may send, instead of twenty or thirty, sixty or seventy Fenians to the House of Commons, and the attempt to wreck Parliament may be renewed, with perhaps still more practical encouragement from English members owing their seats to the Irish vote. Still if we look back not for two years only, but for half a century, we shall see that progress has been made towards a just, beneficent, and voluntary Union. The present relapse, serious as it is, seems to owe its dangerous character not to causes operating in Ireland itself so much as to the machinations of American Fenianism, which have prevented the subsidence of the agrarian agitation. American Fenianism has been greatly developed of late, but it depends on subscriptions, the stream of which can hardly flow forever.

For my part, I repeat with confidence, what I said before. 'Settle the Land Question, and that which alone lends strength to political discontent, to conspiracy, to disunion, will be gone. Passion will not subside in an hour, but it will subside, and good feeling will take its place. The day may come when there will be no more talk of England and Scotland governing Ireland well or ill, because Ireland, in partnership with England and Scotland, will be governing herself, and contributing her share to the common greatness and the common progress; when the Union will be ratified not only by necessity, but by free conviction and good will; when the march of wealth and prosperity will no more be arrested by discord, but the resources of the Island will be developed in peace, and the villas of opulence perhaps will stud the lovely shores, where now the assassin prowls and property cannot

sleep secure; when the long series of Liberal triumphs will be crowned by the sight of an Ireland no longer distracted, disaffected, and reproachful, no longer brooding over the wrongs and sufferings of the past, but resting peacefully, happily, and in unforced union at her consort's side. The life of a nation is long, and though by us this consummation may not be witnessed, it may be witnessed by our children.'



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